

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8229

S E C R E T ATHENS 2708

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MMOL, GR, MASS

SUBJECT: SALE OF REDEYE/HAMLET MISSILES TO GREECE

REF: A. STATE 078539

B. STATE 064859

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN FROM KUBISCH

1. PLEASE EXCUSE MY DELAY IN RESPONDING TO REFTEL B. ON RECEIPT OF THAT MESSAGE I HAD A MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF ON THURSDAY, MARCH 27 AND DISCUSSED IT ALONG WITH SEVERAL OTHER SUBJECTS. I COVERED THE POINTS IN PARAS 1 AND 2 OF THAT MESSAGE AND FOUND THAT AVEROFF WAS ALREADY QUITE FAMILIAR WITH THE SUBJECT. I EXPLAINED TO HIM THE HIGH-LEVEL CONCERN IN THE USG ABOUT THE SAFE-KEEPING OF THESE MISSILES AND SAID THAT I HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO OBTAIN ORAL ASSURANCES FROM HIM THAT THE GREEK ARMED SERVICES WOULD TAKE EXTRAORDINARY PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT THESE WEAPONS AND KEEP THEM UNDER THE EXCLUSIVE CONTROL OF AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL.

2. AVEROFF INSTANTANEOUSLY GAVE ME THOSE ASSURANCES. HE SAID THAT THE USG COULD REST ASSURED THAT THESE WEAPONS WOULD BE KEPT UNDER MAXIMUM SECURITY AND CONTROL OF AUTHORIZED PERSONS. HOWEVER, HE WENT ON, HE WANTED TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT WITH ME FURTHER AT A LATER DATE. HE SAID THAT A FEW

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OF HIS "EXPERT" ADVISERS SEEMED TO BE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT

THESE MISSILES, SAYING THAT BY THEIR DESIGN AND NATURE THEIR PRINCIPAL VALUE WAS IN ATTACKING AIRCRAFT THAT WERE DEPARTING AN AREA PRESUMABLY AFTER HAVING MADE AN OFFENSIVE STRIKE. AVEROFF SAID THAT HIS PLANNING GROUP WAS ALSO CONSIDERING OTHER POSSIBLE APPROACHES AND WEAPONS SYSTEMS FOR AIR DEFENSE, FOR EXAMPLE, MISSILES THAT COULD INTERCEPT ATTACKING AIRCRAFT ON THEIR INBOUND APPROACH. HE SAID HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME AGAIN ON THIS SUBJECT SOON.

3. I TOLD AVEROFF THAT MY UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT THE USG HAD GRAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE SALE AND DEPLOYMENT OF THE REDEYE/HAMLET MISSILES AND THAT IF HE AND THE GOG WERE UNCERTAIN WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED WITH THEIR ACQUISITION, I BELIEVED THAT THE USG WOULD WANT TO RECONSIDER THE ENTIRE TRANSACTION, PERHAPS EXPLORING THE AVAILABILITY TO GREECE OF SOME ALTERNATE WEAPONS SYSTEM OR AIR DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS. I TOLD AVEROFF THAT MY UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT ONE OF THE REASONS WE WERE PREPARED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE TRANSACTION WAS BECAUSE IT WAS FELT IN WASHINGTON THAT THE MATTER HAD PROCEEDED SO FAR THAT IT MIGHT BE MISUNDERSTOOD IN GREECE IF THERE WERE ANY CANCELLATION OF THE ORDER OR A CHANGE IN PLANS. HOWEVER, I SAID, IF THE GOG WAS HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS, I BELIEVED WE SHOULD REEXAMINE THE ENTIRE QUESTION.

4. AVEROFF SAID NO, THAT HE CONSIDERED THE TRANSACTION CLOSED. HOWEVER, AT MY REQUEST, HE AGREED TO DOUBLE CHECK WITH HIS SERVICES AND SEE WHETHER SOME ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE EXPLORED.

5. YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 7, IN ADVANCE OF RECEIVING YOUR FOLLOW-UP INQUIRY (REFTEL A), I SAW AVEROFF AGAIN ON ANOTHER SUBJECT AND WE ALSO DISCUSSED THE REDEYE/HAMLET QUESTION AGAIN. AVEROFF TOLD ME THAT THE MATTER HAD BEEN REEXAMINED AND THAT GREECE DID WISH TO PROCEED WITH THE ACQUISITION OF THE REDEYE/HAMLET MISSILES AS THE ORDER HAD BEEN PLACED AND ACCEPTED BY THE US. I REMINDED HIM ONCE AGAIN OF OUR CONCERN ABOUT THEIR SAFEKEEPING AND HE

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ASKED ME TO ASSURE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN THE USG IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THAT THE GREEK AUTHORITIES WOULD GIVE THESE MISSILES THE CLOSEST CARE AND SEE THAT THEY WERE EXCLUSIVELY CONTROLLED BY SPECIALLY AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL.
KUBISCH

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